

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 CU-02 EB-07 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /068 W

-----011027Z 019889 /23

R 010835Z JUN 77

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4975

AMCONSUL NAPLES

AMCONSUL MILAN

AMCONSUL GENOA

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 8964

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: PINT, IT

SUBJ: AGRICULTURE MINISTER MARCORA'S REMARKS ON POLITICAL  
SITUATION

1. IN THE COURSE OF MY COURTESY CALL ON MAY 27, MINISTER  
OF AGRICULTURE GIOVANNI MARCORA (A DC-LEFT BASE FACTION  
LEADER) MADE A NUMBER OF INTERESTING COMMENTS ON THE  
DOMESTIC POLITICAL SITUATION. MARCORA BELIEVES THAT THE  
PARTIES WILL BE ABLE TO AVOID A CRISIS BY COMING TO  
AGREEMENT ON A PROGRAM ACCORD. HOWEVER, THE CRISIS WILL  
OPEN UP AGAIN IN EARNEST IN THE FALL. AT THAT TIME,  
ITALY WILL FACE A COMBINATION OF ADVERSE CIRCUMSTANCES --  
RETURN OF STUDENTS TO SCHOOL, PRESSURE ON THE LIRA RE-  
SULTING FROM END OF TRADITIONAL SUMMER TOURIST IN-FLOW AND  
AN INCREASE IN OIL IMPORTS (PRESUMABLY COINCIDING WITH  
RE-OPENING OF FACTORIES AFTER SUMMER CLOSING).

2. MARCORA NOTED, MORE IN SORROW THAN IN ANGER, THAT  
THE DC HAD NOT ADOPTED HIS RECOMMENDED TACTICS TO PUT  
THE PCI ON THE SPOT IN THE INTER-PARTY NEGOTIATIONS.  
THE PCI SHOULD HAVE BEEN PRESENTED, HE SAID, WITH CLEAR  
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CHOICES ON THE IMPORTANT ISSUES FACING ITALY. THESE HE DESCRIBED  
AS: (A) PUBLIC ORDER--WHERE PCI SHOULD HAVE HAD TO COMMIT ITSELF  
ON WHETHER IT SUPPORTS THE LEFT-WING MAGISTRATES ASSOCIATION  
WHICH, MEETING IN RIMINI IN APRIL, ASSERTED THAT ITALIAN LAWS  
WERE INVALID SINCE THE ENTIRE STRUCTURE OF ITALIAN SOCIETY  
HAS TO BE REVAMPED; (B) UNIVERSITY REFORM-- WHERE PCI SHOULD  
HAVE HAD TO COMMIT ITSELF ON WHETHER STUDENTS WHO HAD NOT

PASSED THEIR EXAMS IN THEIR FIRST TWO YEARS SHOULD BE DISMISSED FROM THE UNIVERSITY; AND (C) COST OF LABOR -- WHERE PCI SHOULD HAVE HAD TO COMMIT ITSELF ON WHETHER A LIMIT SHOULD BE PLACED ON WAGE ESCALATION PAYMENTS ABOVE A SPECIFIED MAXIMUM. THE PCI, HE SAID, WOULD HAVE THEN FACED A "DAMNED-IF-IT-DOES, DAMNED-IF-IT-DON'T" SITUATION, WHICH WOULD OBVIOUSLY BE TO THE DC'S ADVANTAGE. COMMENT. MARCORA IS NOT ALONE IN HAVING HOPED THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS WOULD HAVE PINNED DOWN THE PCI ON THE TOUGH QUESTIONS. IT IS HIGHLY QUESTIONABLE, HOWEVER, WHETHER SUCH A STRATEGY WOULD HAVE BEEN REALISTIC. IF THE PCI WERE PUSHED INTO A "TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT" SITUATION, A GOVERNMENT CRISIS AND EARLY ELECTIONS WOULD PROBABLY HAVE BEEN THE RESULT -- AN OUTCOME WHICH ALL PARTIES AND, WE BELIEVE MARCORA AS WELL, WANT TO AVOID AT THIS TIME. END COMMENT.

3. MARCORA SPOKE HIGHLY OF ANDREOTTI, WHOM HE DESCRIBED AS A FIRST-RATE PARTY LEADER; INDEED, ONLY HE COULD LEAD THE DC AT THIS MOMENT. MARCORA ASSERTED THAT ANDREOTTI HAD MISSED A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY LAST FALL WHEN THE GOVERNMENT IMPOSED THE 7 PERCENT FOREIGN EXCHANGE TAX. AT THAT CRUCIAL MOMENT, MARCORA BELIEVES, ANDREOTTI COULD HAVE PUSHED THROUGH A TOUGH ECONOMIC PROGRAM. NOW HE CANNOT. COMMENT: MARCORA, A MILANESE, ASSERTED IT WAS UNFORTUNATE THAT ANDREOTTI HAD COME FROM THE ROME/ CHURCH ENVIRONMENT. HE THEN ADDED THAT HE HAD ONCE REMARKED TO ANDREOTTI THAT HE SHOULD HAVE BEEN A MILANESE INSTEAD OF ROMAN, TO WHICH ANDREOTTI HAD REPLIED CONFIDENTIAL

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IT IS THE ONLY THING IN MY LIFE I WAS NOT ABLE TO CONTROL". END COMMENT.

4. MARCORA'S COMMENTS ON THE PCI WERE OF INTEREST. WHILE NOTING THAT HE WAS GENERALLY CONSIDERED TO BE THE "BIGGEST PCI-PHILE" IN THE DC, HE EXPRESSED NEITHER FRIENDSHIP NOR ATTRACTION TO THEM (RECALLING HIS PARTISAN EXPERIENCES DURING WORLD WAR III. AT THE END OF OUR CONVERSATION HE CAUTIONED ME AGAINST ENDORSING THE COMMUNISTS, REFERRING TO PRESS ACCOUNTS THAT I WAS ANXIOUS TO MEET BERLINGUER (SIC) AND THAT I INTENDED TO PURSUE POLICY OF ACCEPTANCE OF PCI. I HASTENED TO SET HIM AND THE RECORD STRAIGHT ON THAT SCORE. NONETHELESS, MARCORA ASSERTED THAT WE SHOULD GRADUALLY MOVE AWAY FROM OUR "NO CONTACT" POLICY WITH THE PCI.

5. COMMENT: MARCORA WAS OUTSPOKEN, FRANK AND DIRECT. I FOUND HIM ENGAGING AND FRIENDLY, EVEN IF I DID NOT

ALWAYS AGREE WITH WHAT HE HAD TO SAY. GARDNER

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## Message Attributes

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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009